

ELEVENTH

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE PHILADELPHIA

FEMALE ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY.

January 9, 1845.

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1845.

## ANNUAL REPORT.

Another year has fled ! The very rapid revolution of our passing years, and the apparently increasing velocity with which they succeed one another, has rendered this announcement so common-place, that it scarce awakens a deep emotion in any breast. And yet, could we cause to pass before our minds, true and vivid images of all the scenes which have been enacted on one plantation in the far South since our last anniversary, and could we multiply them by the number of plantations where similar scenes have transpired, we could no longer think or speak lightly of the transition of a single year. Its moments, measured by suffering, would be lengthened into hours, its days into years. With us it has passed joyously, on light wings, and with none to molest or make us afraid, we have met to exchange the glad congratulations of freemen, and to partake of its closing festivities, or, rather and better far, have made those festive hours a season of diligent labor and earnest pleading for the slave. It is well that we should ask, how has it passed with him, and that we should reflect long and seriously upon the sad reply which will be borne to us, in visions of desolated homes and broken hearts and darkened intellects, of

intense physical suffering, and the keener anguish produced by the sundering of the holiest ties of life. It is well that we should often ponder these things in our hearts, lest the apathy which pervades a large part of the community should steal over us, and we should begin to think that the victims of slavery have become accustomed to its endurance, as we have to the recital of its horrors. It is well that we should pause, at this season, and suffer these impressions to be deepened on our souls, that we may gird ourselves for the new year, with the zeal and ardor of neophytes, combined with the stronger faith and determined purpose, won from a long experience of trials and labors.

In the retrospect of the last year, we see cheering evidence of the progress of our cause, fully proving that they who have labored for its promotion, have not spent their strength in vain. It is true that we have, as in former years, seen the helpless slave standing at the doors of ecclesiastical Conventions, Assemblies and Conferences, imploring succor from those who were powerful to give it, and have witnessed the cruel denial or the reluctant granting of a meager pittance; it is true that we have seen the American people gladly bestowing their highest honors on the slave's oppressor, yet we also discern other and better "signs of the times." The anti-slavery spirit has penetrated nearly all our great northern institutions,

and though it encounters within them powerful and fierce opposition, still it is there, busy at the work of exorcising its antagonist. It is no trifling evidence of the strength of our cause, that the discussions which most engross the attention and occupy the time of our large ecclesiastical conventions, are frequently those relative to the subject of slavery; and although their result has not been such as truth and justice demanded, and although some to whom the advocacy of the slave's cause was committed, proved, in the trial hour, not wholly faithful to their trust, yet much was gained for the right, and it was evident, to a watchful observer, that elements are at work within these organizations which will purify them from slavery, or rend them asunder. And not in the church alone do we see tokens of an improving public sentiment. The recent movements in Congress clearly reveal the encouraging fact that statesmen, who carefully watch the national pulse, have observed some indications of returning health, and feel compelled, however reluctantly, to be guided by them. These things, in which we gratefully rejoice to-day, are the natural result of causes put in operation by a dauntless friend of the slave, many years ago, and which have been continued and increased, until the present time by the multitudes who have flocked around the anti-slavery standard. The preaching of the truth, the simple, uncompromising truth, and its application to

the heart and conscience of the hearer, has been the great agency, in this as in other reforms, and in its potency this Society have full and undiminished confidence. The weapons with which they would aid in carrying on this warfare, are those which were adopted by the early abolitionists, eleven years since ; even "the opposition of moral purity to moral corruption—the destruction of error by the potency of truth—the overthrow of prejudice by the power of love." By the use of such instrumentalities, ordained by God and tested by the experience of ages, do we hope for success, for we measure not strength by numbers, in a warfare where one can "chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight."

As we look for the accomplishment of our object, only through the renovation of public sentiment, we deem that it would be worse than useless to expend our time and energies in propelling the machinery of political parties, for we are well aware that until the public mind is rectified, political parties can do little for us, and when it is rectified, they will be, as now, but its exponents. Our work is to assist, as much as possible, in this renovation. In its efforts to do thus, this Society has, during the past year, borne a decided testimony against the practice, too common among abolitionists, of giving a solemn pledge of support to the system of American slavery, while it is legalized by the statutes of Southern states, in order

to obtain power to abolish it speedily. At a stated meeting, held Sept. 19th, 1844, the Society adopted the following resolution:

*Resolved*, That this Society heartily co-operates with the American Anti-Slavery Society, in its present measures for the promotion of our cause, and that our influence shall be exerted in support of the doctrine that abolitionists can consistently have no union with slaveholders, by voting for officers, who must swear to support the constitution of the United States.

Granting that the pledge thus given, personally or by proxy, would secure the desired power, and that power, thus obtained, would be righteously exerted, we know no principle of ethics which will justify such a promise, save that which teaches the doing of evil that good may come. A vow of adherence to a compact admitted to be unrighteous and oppressive, for the sake of fancied good results, is so palpably inconsistent with the law of right, that the delusive influences which can justify it in the eyes of a reformer, must be powerful indeed. It may be asked, why was not the discovery sooner made by abolitionists, that such is the character of the United States Constitution, and that it is a barrier to the progress of the anti-slavery enterprise? The question is easily answered. They who attempt the reformation of popular abuses, never perceive at the outset all the difficulties which lie in their path, or all that the true application of their principles will require of them.

selves or others. As they progress, step by step, in their arduous course, assailing and removing one barrier after another, pursuing from one hiding-place to another, the evil they combat, they find new fields of labor unexpectedly opening before them; new duties and sacrifices never anticipated, demanded of them, by their own erect and lofty standard. The spirit of slavery during the last ten years has fortified itself with various defences, and assumed numberless disguises, to baffle the strength or elude the vigilance of its enemies; when driven from one citadel, it has found another refuge; and when an Ithuriel spear has unmasked it, it has quickly stolen the garb of another angel of light. The fact that abolitionists have been slow to perceive that the constitution of the United States afforded it shelter, may be attributed to the undue veneration with which that instrument has been regarded by the American people. From our nation's birth, it has been sanctified in their eyes, as the palladium of their liberties, until it is deemed sacrilege to speak of it, save in reverential tones. Thus venerated, it has had power to impart a portion of its own sanctity to the vilest system of oppression, and its requisitions that the fugitive slave shall be returned to his oppressor, and that the northern freeman shall be pledged to suppress southern insurrection, have been honored by the appellation of a "sacred compact," and we have heard, from a high place of power in

our land, the impious inquiry, addressed to the abolitionist, "Vain man! who told you that God's ordinances are higher than the laws of man?" and from another source, not less influential, the bold assertion, that while human statutes exist, they should be honored and obeyed, although they do contravene the law of God. When such a state of things exists among us, it is time that abolitionists should lift their voices in solemn remonstrance against human laws and constitutions and compacts, however ancient and venerated, which violate the immutable, eternal principles of right. If we have been slow in discovering the character of some of these, we will seek to repair the deficiency, by our zeal and diligence in opposing them, now that the discovery is made.

There is another alliance with slavery, against which this Society desires to bear a practical testimony. It consists in supplying the slaveholder with the chief inducement to keep his slaves in bondage, by purchasing the products of their labor. As it would be impossible for him to derive pecuniary gain from the system, if he could find no consumers of such products, it is evident that it is they who enable him to continue his oppression, and we deeply regret the lamentable fact, that among such are many true-hearted though inconsistent abolitionists.

During the past year, we have, as usual, circulated petitions to Congress and our State legislature, the



former asking that the constitution and laws of the United States may be so amended that citizens of Pennsylvania shall be released "from all participation in the support of American slavery," and that slaves shall not be compelled "to return for the purpose of residence, to any state where the laws prevent such slave from being taught to read the bible;" and the latter asking for the repeal of "the law whereby slaves brought into Pennsylvania by their masters, may be here detained in involuntary servitude for the space of six months."

The prosperity which has this year attended our Fair, as also, the degree of success with which the God of the oppressed has attended any of our efforts, demands our fervent gratitude, and should incite to increased diligence.

We address ourselves to the labors of the future, full of hope and encouragement. We see the precious seed of anti-slavery truth, sown in former years, springing up around us, and we believe that from that which we now go forth to sow, we shall at some future day, gather a rich harvest. We know that we are weak, and that the evil which we would destroy is mighty, but our weapons are mighty and will prevail. Let not the oppressor laugh in fancied security at our attempts to overthrow gigantic institutions, only by the utterance of the words of truth.

They have undermined and demolished many a stronghold of sin.

“ Words are weapons, better, truer,  
 Sharper than the battle sword!  
 Strong against the evil-doer,  
 With the server of the Lord!

“ Words have shaken the foundations  
 Of old empires wide and strong,  
 And cast down the kings and nations  
 From the thrones of pride and wrong.

Earnest words for freedom spoken,  
 Make the blind and bondman brave,  
 And the might of words hath broken,  
 E'en the fetters of the slave!”

We have the promise of the God of truth that His word shall not return unto Him void. Therefore will we utter it freely, boldly, trustingly. We rejoice that the country is agitated with the discussion of slavery in its many bearings on our civil and religious interests, both domestic and foreign. That in high places and low throughout our land, it is the topic of familiar conversation and serious thought. We rejoice that abolitionists are earnestly inquiring what new duties and sacrifices are required of them, and by what means they may best promote the cause of freedom. In these things we read the doom of slavery. It may be that from among northern free-men, other victims may be selected for sacrifice on its bloody altar, that other abolitionists may be in-

carcerated in its dungeons with those already suffering there the penalty, meted to them by "*the freest people on earth*," for the crime of assisting their fellow men to obtain their birth-right of liberty. But these mad efforts to prolong its existence will but hasten its destruction. We know that its days are numbered. To a few more years of arduous toil, to peril or suffering, if it await us, we gladly devote ourselves, with the firm and cheering hope that, over its fall and utter ruin, we shall soon hear the glad shout of the exulting earth, and the rejoicing song of heaven.

# TREASURER'S REPORT.

*The Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society, in account with Margaret Jones, Treasurer.*

1845.	DR.	1845.	CR.
To cash paid Penn. A. S. Society,	\$350 00	By balance on hand, 1st mo. 11, 1844,	\$539 14
S. M. Douglass for rent of School-room,	125 00	Members' subscriptions,	103 75
20 copies of Liberator,	50 00	Cash from Sale of 1843,	10 35
10 " Standard,	20 00	Donations,	2 50
30 " Pa. Freeman,	22 50	Error in account,	10
Merrihew & Thompson,	17 50		
Rent of Hall,	6 70		
Ledger for Advertising,	1 25		
Postage of Liberator,	1 04		
Balance on hand, 1st mo. 8, 1845,	79 63		
	\$672 92		\$672 92

SUSAN GREW, Auditor.

**CONSTITUTION**  
**OF THE PHILADELPHIA**  
**FEMALE ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY.**

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WHEREAS, more than two millions of our fellow countrymen, of these United States, are held in abject bondage; and whereas, we believe that slavery and prejudice against color are contrary to the laws of God, and to the principles of our far-famed declaration of Independence, and recognising the right of the slave to immediate emancipation; we deem it our duty to manifest our abhorrence of the flagrant injustice and deep sin of slavery, by united and vigorous exertions for its speedy removal, and for the restoration of the people of color to their inalienable rights. For these purposes, we the undersigned agree to associate ourselves under the name of "THE PHILADELPHIA FEMALE ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY."

**ARTICLE I.**

The object of this Society shall be to collect and disseminate correct information of the character of slavery, and of the actual condition of the slaves and free people of color, for the purpose of inducing the community to adopt such measures, as may be in their power, to dispel the prejudice against the people of color, to improve their condition, and to bring about the speedy abolition of slavery.

**ARTICLE II.**

Any female uniting in these views, and contributing to the funds, shall be a member of the Society.

## ARTICLE III.

The officers of the Society shall be a President, a Vice President, a Recording Secretary, a Corresponding Secretary, a Treasurer, and Librarian, who, with six other members, shall constitute a Board of Managers. They shall keep a record of their proceedings, which shall be laid before the Society at its stated meetings. They shall have power to fill any vacancy that may occur in their number, till the next annual meeting.

## ARTICLE IV.

The President shall preside at all meetings of the Society, and shall have power to call special meetings of the Society, and of the Board.

## ARTICLE V.

The Vice President shall perform the duties of the President in her absence.

## ARTICLE VI.

The Recording Secretary shall keep a record of the transactions of the Society, and notify all meetings of the Society.

## ARTICLE VII.

The corresponding Secretary shall keep all communications addressed to the Society, and manage all the correspondence with any other bodies or individuals, according to the directions of the Society or of the Managers.

## ARTICLE VIII.

The Treasurer shall collect the subscriptions and grants to the Society, make payments according to its directions and those of its Managers, and present an audited report at each annual meeting.

## ARTICLE IX.

The Librarian shall take charge of all books and pamphlets belonging to the Society, and conform to the rules

prescribed by the Society, for the management of the library.

#### ARTICLE X.

Stated meetings of the Society shall be held on the second Fifth-day in every month, excepting the Seventh and Eighth months, (July and August.)

#### ARTICLE XI.

The annual meeting shall be held on the second Fifth-day, (Thursday,) of the First month, (January,) at which time the reports of the Board and Treasurer shall be presented, and the officers for the ensuing year elected.

#### ARTICLE XII.

It is especially recommended that the members of this Society should entirely abstain from purchasing the products of slave labor, that we may be able consistently to plead the cause of our brethren in bonds.

#### ARTICLE XIII.

This constitution may be altered at any stated meeting by the vote of two-thirds of the members present, notice having been given at a previous meeting.